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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. Mideast

[1](#)2. Iran

Key stories in the media:

Israel Radio quoted an unnamed Israeli diplomat as saying that there is no disagreement with the U.S. regarding the issue of construction freeze in the settlements. The diplomat was quoted as saying that

the sides are discussing the duration of the freeze and what will happen afterwards, and that Israel is not discussing the cessation of construction in Jerusalem. The radio reported that today in New York. Israeli envoys Yitzhak Molcho and Mike Herzog are slated to meet with U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell. Israel Radio said that diplomats in New York are lowering expectations in advance of the meeting; their expectation that Mitchell will return to the region this month for further talks is cited.

Electronic media reported that this morning in Jerusalem Silvan Shalom, Vice PM and Minister for Regional Development and the Development of the Negev and the Galilee, met with the PAQs Economy Minister Bassem Khoury. The Jerusalem PostQs Web site reported that the talks are focused on economic proposals to improve life for the Palestinians. Officials were quoted as saying that the agenda includes proposals to ease restrictions on the entry of Palestinian businesspeople and VIPs to Israel. The minister also reportedly want to boost Israeli meat exports to the West Bank and dairy imports from the West Bank to Israel and increase medical treatment for Palestinians in Israel. They also are to discuss joint industrial parks meant to further what Netanyahu has termed an "economic peace."

Yediot and Israel Radio cited a TIME Magazine report that the EUQs rapporteur on piracy and a former commander of the Estonian armed forces, Admiral Tarmo Kouts told the magazine that only a shipment of missiles could account for Russia's bizarre behavior throughout the month-long saga of the Russian merchant vessel Arctic Sea. Kouts was quoted as saying that an Israeli interception of the cargo is the most likely explanation. However, Dmitri Rogozin, Russia's envoy to NATO, has vehemently denied KoutsQs comments. Yediot reported that the Russian newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda quoted a senior general in the Russian Army Qwho is close to the investigation of the affairQ as saying that the Arctic Sea was transporting missiles to Iran, apparently of the S-300 class or X-55 cruise missiles. The radio reported that Israel had no comments on the affair.

The Jerusalem Post and Israel Hayom reported that Minister-without-Portfolio Yossi Peled (Likud) told Likud activists in Tel Aviv yesterday that PM Benjamin Netanyahu has not made a deal with the Obama administration to freeze construction in the West Bank. Peled had accompanied Netanyahu to Europe.

Israel Radio reported that President Obama told a Muslim American audience at an Iftar dinner he hosted yesterday that QIslam is part of America.

HaQaretz reported that, during a meeting with PM Netanyahu in August, settler leaders told him that he had humiliated them and that they will not hesitate to act against them. The newspaper reported that the PM told them: QUltimately, we are all interested in the same thing, but on must act wisely.

Citing a report published on Monday by the Palestinian Maan news agency, The Jerusalem Post quoted PA Prisoner Affairs Minister Issa Karaki as saying that Israel was not doing enough to maintain the health of Palestinian prisoners. Karaki cited the recent discovery of cancer in 25 Palestinian prisoners, which he called a Qtroubling phenomenon.

The Jerusalem Post reported that FM Avigdor Lieberman will embark today on a nine-day, five-country tour of Africa -- Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda. Makor Rishon-Hatzofe reported that Lieberman will dedicate the Project for Excellence in Agriculture for Building Human Agricultural Wealth in Ethiopia, which is part of a joint project of Israel, the U.S., and Ethiopia. The Minister of Agriculture, the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, and representatives of USAID will also attend. Lieberman was quoted as saying that the visit was part of his plan to open "new directions" for Israeli diplomacy and that it would improve Israel's standing in the international forums in which African nations have a significant presence. Lieberman's visit comes just two days after Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi said (according to an AFP report) at a special African Union summit in Tripoli to mark 40 years of this rule that Israel was causing all of Africa's woes. Qadhafi demanded the closure of all Israeli embassies across Africa, describing Israel as

a "gang" and saying it used "the protection of minorities as an excuse to launch conflicts."

The media reported that yesterday DM Ehud Barak told students and parents in a Negev school that the state cannot guarantee soldiers safety. The media quoted Barak as saying: QDonQt whineQ about Gilad Shalit. The Jerusalem Post Web site cited the response of the Shalit family-run campaign for ShalitQs release: "We're not whining, we are fighting for Gilad's life." Yediot quoted the Shalit family as saying that Barak should first bring a sign of life from Gilad.

The Jerusalem Post cited a halachic (religious) decision issued on Monday night by a group of rabbis calling themselves "The New Sanhedrin" that a Jew who sells land to an Arab in Israel should not be allowed to lead prayers in synagogue, should not be given the right to make a blessing during the Torah reading, should not be counted among the quorum needed for public prayers, and is considered an abettor to the enemies of Israel.

Yediot reported that early this week National Security Adviser Uzi Arad visited Jordan to try to convince the royal Jordanian court to apply pressure on the Palestinians so that they agree to meet with Netanyahu.

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe quoted sources in Washington as saying that President Obama is considering postponing by three months the date of IranQs answer to the U.S. conditions for a dialogue. The Jerusalem Post said that Iran is reportedly ready to hold talks with the West. The Jerusalem Post quoted a senior Israeli diplomatic official as saying that the Iranians were doing little more than engaging in Qbrinkmanship.Q The media also reported that, in an interview with the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists Mohamed ElBaradei, outgoing chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), called the Iranian threat "hyped," saying there is no proof the Islamic republic will soon have nuclear weapons. However, ElBaradei admitted that Qthere is concern about Iran's future intentions and Iran needs to be more transparent with the IAEA and international community."

Yediot reported that, commenting on a confidential report he wrote on the Israeli GovernmentQs handling of the Jonathan Pollard affair, State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss said that there have been flaws in the efforts to have him released.

HaQaretz reported that last week's 80-ton test of explosives in the Negev was not for earthquake research as originally reported, but was meant to simulate a ballistic missile attack. The test was conducted by the Geophysical Institute in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Defense. It took place at the Sayyarim military base in the southern Negev.

HaQaretz reported that despite the agreement that was reached with Petah Tikva schools regarding the admission of pupils of Ethiopian origin, few students found a place in those institutions yesterday.

1. Mideast:

Block Quotes:

1. "This Time Barak Is Right"

Former Labor Party politician Uzi Baram wrote in the independent Israel Hayom (9/2): QEhud Barak is right.I have been opposed to most of his political steps in the past years, but when I heard Barak say that "Gilad Shalit's release should not be at all costs," I felt rare identification with the things that were said. The public brainwashing on the matter of Gilad Shalit has long passed reasonable boundaries. Indeed, Israel should do everything in its power to bring back its sons who are being held captive by the enemy, but the Israeli Government also has a duty to foresee the possibility of additional kidnappings, which would soon lead to an escalation in the circle of extortion. It may be that some of the Palestinian prisoners should be freed due to reasons of time, but it is unthinkable to have a situation where the Israeli government is subjected to unbearably heavy one-sided pressure to free the soldier

from Hamas captivity Qat any cost that is demandedQ. As a disciple of anti-racist, humanist and liberal approaches that support equality among human beings, irrespective of race and sex, I object to the numerical equation of thousands of Palestinian prisoners versus one Israeli prisoner.

II. "IQm a Proud Winner"

Amir Goldschmidt, chairman of the youth task force for Gilad Shalit, wrote in Israel Hayom (9/2): QMr. Defense Minister Ehud Barak, I heard your statements, and I was astonished. Your job as defense minister is to look after the IDF soldiers and the citizens of Israel, by all possible means. It is the state's job mainly to look after its sons and daughters who enlist in the army in order to defend their family, their state and their freedom. Young people, including myself, enlist in the army not only as a duty but also as a privilege, and I am aware that there is a chance that I will die in defense of my homeland. I am prepared for this, but I would like to know that the state and the government will stand behind me if I am kidnapped. Before this, there is a soldier in captivity who was kidnapped during his military service by a terrorist organization, and he has been forsaken by you and by the Israeli Government for over three years. Your job entails moral, command and personal responsibility for Gilad's return. We are fed up with sayings and quotes -- we want Gilad at home. It is unthinkable that your response to the youth will be Qdon't whine about GiladQ -- would you like us to go out and celebrate? We do not call this Qwhining,Q we call it social fortitude, caring and social involvement -- when young people stand on their feet, not sitting in front of the computer or drugging themselves with a reality TV show, but fighting for the life of a soldier who went to defend us. These are young people of the highest caliber, the kind who truly act rather than just talk. If the fact that we care about Gilad Shalit means that we are whiners, then we are proud whiners, how about you? My request to you is simple. Spare us the words, the quotes and the showy sentences. Act quickly, do your job and bring Gilad back.

III. "Hatred Redux"

Arab affairs correspondent Smadar Perry wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (9/2): QWhoever insists on watching the leading Ramadan serials [in the Aab world], will immediately feel that he is traveling in reverse through a time tunnel. Peace education? The end of the era of wars? Not on the small screen. After the scripts have been approved by the authorities, and the venom drips three times a day in reruns, no one will escape the brainwashing. This week, the ruler of Dubai announced a \$1-million prize for an outstanding television series. In Dubai, they show QStrictly ConfidentialQ every night. This is the story of a married psychiatrist, a mother of two, who travels to work in one of the Gulf emirates and catches her husband having an affair. There are no Israelis here, the Mossad is not involved, there is no politics, just in-depth treatment of the hopeless status of the Arab women, just as Yusra, the legendary Egyptian star, likes. We are keeping our fingers crossed for you here, Yusra. May you win the million, and may your series be screened all over until next Ramadan.

IV. "Democratic Wild Weeds"

Conservative Op-Ed Page Editor Ben-Dror Yemini wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (9/2): QLet us not get too upset over the young Arab man, Rawi Sultani, who allegedly conspired with Hizbullah to assassinate the Chief of Staff. The truth is that only a tiny, fringe, negligible minority among Israeli Arabs reaches the point of engaging in hostile activity. The number of Arab young people who join the National Service, despite the opposition of the leaders who incite against it, is much greater than that of those who are recruited for hostile activity.... The dissonance between the sane majority, in Israel and throughout the world, and the radical leadership needs rethinking. Balad and [its former, self-exiled leader Azmi] Bishara, for example, should have been shunned long ago.... [A twisted version of rights] encourages radicalism and support for violence. Instead of the sane majority among Israeli Arabs gaining expression, individuals, groups and even judicial echelons are mobilized to defend individuals and political parties that support violence or reject the existence of Israel as a Jewish and democratic country. The illusion that protection under the law

will cause the radical elements to become moderate does not pass the test of reality. It has not happened in Europe, where those groups that are the most prominently radical win approval, and it certainly has not happened in Israel. The problem is that not only has the radical left become a prisoner of the hollow mantras of the discourse of rights. These opinions are legitimate. They are part of free expression. The problem is that official organizations have joined this discourse -- not because they support Balad [the Democratic National Assembly Party], but for reasons of freedom of organization and freedom of expression. Surrender to radical groups does not strengthen democracy. Those who say that Qwe must encourage resistanceQ (read: armed struggle) and those who shout QPariahQ to a young man who volunteers for community service do not deserve legal protection. On the contrary. Protecting it is tantamount to giving a booster shot to the young man who allegedly abetted Hizbullah. Israeli democracy must decide between Bishara and [current Balad leader Jamal] Zahalka on the one hand and the majority of young people who support national service on the other. Currently, the choice is in favor of the former. Let us not be surprised that they are sprouting wild, hostile weeds.

12. Iran:

Block Quotes:

"HobsonQs Choice"

Former Ambassador to the U.S., former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and former Minister of Defense Moshe Arens wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (9/2): QA ... convoluted argument ... goes something like this: In order to impose economic sanctions on Iran, the United States needs the support of a regional Arab coalition -- Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia -- and these countries will not lend their support for such sanctions unless Israel ceases to build in Judea and Samaria [i.e. the West Bank]. But that seems almost preposterous. These countries really do not weigh very heavily in the scales when it comes to the imposition of sanctions against Iran, but even if that were to turn out to be a major consideration in the American decision-making process when it comes to arresting Iran's race for nuclear armaments, would any of these countries really opt for a nuclear Armageddon in the region if Israel does not cease building in Judea and Samaria?

So what is the origin of this hypothetical non-dilemma that must be keeping Israelis awake at night these past few months? Is it the result of the feverish imagination of some of our news media? Regardless of just who has been promoting this ludicrous idea, its origin surely lies in the fact that for the past few years Israeli leaders have been first in line to sound the alarm bells and push the panic button regarding the Iranian effort to attain nuclear armaments. They have hardly talked about anything else.... If somebody is looking for an excuse to stop building in the settlements in Judea and Samaria, the Iranian bomb is not a legitimate excuse. The settlements do not appear as a variable in the Iranian nuclear equation.

CUNNINGHAM